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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

23 MAY, 1980

contents

GEOFFREY HOSKING	Fiction Alexander Zinoviev: <i>The Yawning Heights</i> Svetloe budushchee Zapiski nochnogo storozha V predverii raya (Anteroom to Paradise) 58pp. Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme.
EDWIN MORGAN ANTHONY THWAITE	M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin: <i>The History of a Town</i> The View from Hakone (poem)
VALERIE PEARL	T. S. Willan: Elizabeth Moncheste D. M. Palliser: Tudor York
JOHN LUCAS	Fiction George Meredith: <i>Dianna of the Crossways</i> George Gissing: <i>The Odd Women</i> G. Bernard Shaw: <i>An Unsocial Socialist</i> H. G. Wells: <i>Ann Veronica</i>
MICHAEL TREND ROSEMARY DINNAGE CAROL RUMENS GALEN STRAWSON	Pierre de Calan: <i>Cosmas or the Love of God</i> John Updike: <i>Problems</i> Deborah Moggach: <i>A Quiet Drink</i> Paul Breeze: <i>Back Street Runner</i>
BERNARD NORTON HUGH MONTGOMERY- MASSINGBERD ROBERT CONQUEST	Maurice Goldsmith: <i>Sage</i> Lesley Lewis: <i>Private Life of a Country House</i> Here's How (poem)
JOHN JONES	Stratis Havaras (Editor): <i>The Poet's Voice—Poets Reading Aloud and Commenting upon their Works</i> Donald Davie: <i>Trying to Explain</i>
BERNARD BERGONZI	Roscoe C. Hinkle: <i>Founding Theory of American Sociology 1881-1915</i> Cardiac Department (poem)
ANTHONY GIDDENS CONNIE DENSLY	Viewpoint Odysseus Elytis: <i>Eklogi, 1935-1977</i>
GROFFREY MARSHALL RODERICK BRATON	Commentary Beaumont and Fletcher's "The Maid's Tragedy" (The Other Place, Stratford) Sam Shepard's "Seduced" (Royal Court Theatre Upstairs) Ben Travers's "After You With The Milk" (Birmingham Rep) Paul Bailey and Tristram Powell's BBC "Omnibus" on J. R. Ackerley Grass/Schindleroff "The Tin Drum" (Odeon Cinema, Haymarket) Rattigan's "The Browning Version" and "Harlequinade" (Lyttelton Theatre)
PETER HOLLAND CHRISTOPHER EDWARDS T. P. MATHESON ANDREW MOTION RONALD HAYMAN PAUL BAILEY	Lily and Violin (poem) Fifty years on
JOHN FULLER	To the Editor Author, Author Among this week's contributors
ERIC KORN GAVIN EWART	Reminders Gods and Heroes (poem)
VICKI FEAYER	Sylvia Townsend Warner: <i>Twelve Poems</i> Ruth Fairlight: <i>Sibyls and Others</i> John Campbell-Kense: <i>On the Third Day</i> Jeremy Hooker: <i>Landscape of the Daylight Moon</i> Robin Skelton: <i>Landmarks</i> Keith Bosley: <i>Stations</i> J. H. Prynne: <i>Down where changed</i> Stephen Dunstan: <i>Tarot Poems</i> Alasdair Paterson: <i>Terra Nova</i> Sheenagh Pugh: <i>What a Place to Grow Flowers</i> Elma Mitchell: <i>The Human Cage</i> Dennis Keene: <i>Surviving</i> Michael D. Butler: <i>Street and Sky</i>
ANNE STEVENSON	Julian Symonds
CHRISTOPHER TILL	Karl Josef Holteig: <i>Francis Quarles, 1592-1644</i>
ERIC ADAMS	Kendeth Garlick and Angus MacIntyre (Editors): <i>The Diary of Joseph Forington</i>
JULIAN JEFFS	Jeffrey Benson and Alastair Mackenzie: <i>Sauternes—A Study of the Great Sweet Wines</i>
RICHARD MACCORMACK	Tony Aldous and Brian Clouston: <i>Landscape by Design</i> A. E. Weddle (Editor): <i>Landscape Techniques</i>
VICTORIA CLENDINNING	Speranza: <i>a leaning tower of courage</i>
ROBERT WISTRICH	Nicholas Bethell: <i>The Palestine Triangle</i> Evan M. Wilson: <i>Decision on Palestine</i> Edward W. Said: <i>The Question of Palestine</i> Joel S. Migdal: <i>Palestinian Society and Politics</i> Said's Wife (poem)
DAVID SWEETMAN	Ernest R. Kuoholm: <i>The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East</i> Carole Klein: <i>Alone</i>
G. M. WOODHOUSE CELINA FOX	William Thomas: <i>The Philosophical Radicals</i> Mark A. Kishlansky: <i>The Rise of the New Model Army</i>
J. F. C. HARRISON KEVIN QUARKE	Matthew J. Bracken (Editor): <i>James Gould Cozzano—New Acquisit of Two Experiences</i> Geoffrey Argyle: <i>Anthony Burgess, The Artist as Novelist</i>
RUPERT CHRISTIANSEN D. W. MICHOU	

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ALEXANDER ZINOVIEV:

The Yawning Heights
Translated by Gordon Clough.
82pp. Bodley Head. £9.95.

Svetloe budushchee
(The Radiant Future)
21pp. Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme.
Zapiski nochnogo storozha
(Notes of a Night Watchman)
113pp. Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme.
V predverii raya
(Anteroom to Paradise)
58pp. Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme.

Alexander Zinoviev must be one of the world's fastest writers. It is less than four years ago that his first novel (outside his professional specialty) was published, and that was a gigantic novel, *The Yawning Heights*, running to more than eight hundred pages in the English translation. Since then, he has published three more novels (one of them of comparable length), given interviews and written articles to fill a book, and announced the publication of a further four-part novel, of which, indeed, the first volume has just appeared.

Not, of course, that all the work of creation has been confined to those four years. In fact, these books represent the outpouring of a lifetime's accumulated experience, reflection and frustration. For twenty-two years Zinoviev was a member of the Institute of Philosophy of the Soviet Academy of Sciences; he was also a professor of logic and for a time head of the Department of Logic at Moscow University. He gained an international reputation in the field of mathematical logic, which earned him membership of the Finnish Academy of Sciences and numerous invitations to lecture abroad. But he was never able to accept any of these invitations because the Soviet authorities had a file on him dating back to 1939, when he was expelled from the USSR for "bourgeois nationalism" and "anti-Soviet propaganda". Although he later "after" the death of Stalin joined the Communist Party, he did so, as he himself says, with the intention of continuing his fight against Stalinism legally. His candidate's (or Zinoviev's) name for this "anti-Soviet Union" is haunted by the absence of the "magnificent prospects" of which the ideologist Andrei Zhdanov spoke in his keynote speech to the first Congress of the Soviet Writers' Union in 1934. Time is completely fragmented. Plot-lines are intertwined with each other in a confusing and inconsequential way, and are frequently interrupted by conversations, songs and speculative digressions. The sense of place is vague: at times Ibsen appears to cover the whole world, at others it is merely a muddy extended village where everybody knows everybody else. Language has lost its context: high and low styles alternate, and ordinary narrative lies side by side with theoretical discourse, doggerel verse and idle gossip. Human

beings have lost their individuality: they are all called Ibanov (an amalgam of the commonest Russian surname and the commonest Russian obscenity), and are otherwise designated by category names, like Thinker, Sociologist, Member, and so on.

The narrator is no longer confident or omniscient. Indeed, he is no longer a single person, but has divided himself into the figures of Chuterer, Bawler, Slanderer, Neurotic, Schizophrenic, and probably others too. It is not even clear what the genre of *Yawning Heights* is: "novel" seems an inappropriate term for such a ragbag of miscellaneous items. At times it seems more like a theoretical treatise, since several of its characters have an irresistible itch to sit down and expatiate in sociological, anthropological or philosophical terms about their (otherwise meaningless) experience. But as a whole the work does not have, and does not appear to aim at, the coherence of a theoretical or scientific study. Perhaps in the end, one might best characterize it as a four-million letter expulsive hurled in the face of the Soviet authorities.

In some ways Zinoviev is the passive vehicle through which the verbal material of Soviet society, provided and spoken, official and unofficial, facade and reality, finds its expression. But the material is so fragmented, distorted and rearranged that the reader has some difficulty at first in reorienting himself. The title of the first novel, *The Yawning Heights*, is a preliminary salutary shock. In the traditional rhetoric of the "heights" of communism are "yawning" (or "gaping") (zypayushchie), the word usually applied to an abyss (or sound even better in French, where the adjective follows the noun, with splendid clauding bathos).

In that oxymoron the whole work is foreshadowed. The traditional Socialist Realist novel, with its positive heroes, its confident and omniscient narrator, its edifying language and its happy ending, has been rudely turned on its head. We face nothing less than the Soviet equivalent of the "death of God". For if the Great Future no longer exists, then all the institutions of Soviet society, its justification, and life becomes just "one damn thing after another". Really, if it can no longer be depicted in the light of its revolutionary development, it becomes merely neutral, but nightmare-legal. Ibsen's name for this "anti-Soviet Union" is haunted by the absence of the "magnificent prospects" of which the ideologist Andrei Zhdanov spoke in his keynote speech to the first Congress of the Soviet Writers' Union in 1934. Time is completely fragmented. Plot-lines are intertwined with each other in a confusing and inconsequential way, and are frequently interrupted by conversations, songs and speculative digressions. The sense of place is vague: at times Ibsen appears to cover the whole world, at others it is merely a muddy extended village where everybody knows everybody else. Language has lost its context: high and low styles alternate, and ordinary narrative lies side by side with theoretical discourse, doggerel verse and idle gossip. Human

return to the well-tried system of exterminatory labour camps. Zinoviev's account of the process of creation of his "novels" explains much of their form. They read like the work of a man assembling miscellaneous recollections in a state of "high". That is true both in the good and the bad sense. On the one hand we have a superb satirist presenting an original and penetrating indictment of Soviet society. On the other hand we have the tiresome gossip and archaic theoretician, repeating himself endlessly and without any sense of form. Both sides of Zinoviev seem to be indissolubly linked, and probably we could not have the one without the other. So inevitably the reader has a good deal of work to do, but it is undoubtedly well worth doing. Anyone who wants to understand the Soviet Union today must take Zinoviev into account.

It does, however, have very important things to say about Soviet society—things which, needless to say, are highly unwelcome to the authorities, but which, for all that, are scarcely more welcome to many dissenters and émigrés. Zinoviev's central thesis is that the Soviet Union is a normal society. It is not the product of a diabolical imported ideology: on the contrary, its arrangements are those which natural man would create for himself without the restraints imposed by centuries of civilized society. Indeed, Ibsen is in part a Hobbesian vision. The "war of all against all" is continuous, and man's life is "poor, nasty and brutish", though, as it happens, far from solitary, since aimless sociability is constant, and the perpetual struggle for the few good things of life generates factions.

Hobbes's Leviathan, moreover, has somehow contrived to get himself already firmly installed in the state of nature, without waiting for a social contract, and far from riding imperially above the battle restraining it, actually lays down the ground rules, organizes the contest, provides the weapons and awards the prizes. Even without a social contract, however, the Leviathan rules with the approval of the great majority of its subjects, since it guarantees (tax, medicine, justice, security, a tolerable standard of living and a set of comfortable illusions). "Marxism is the ideology of the most mediocre sector of society, an ideology created by and for them."

To give meaning to the otherwise senselessly dull round of jockeying for status and material goods, the ideology invents its own pseudo-events, an endless round of anniversaries and celebrations (the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution, the hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birth, the thirty-fifth anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War, and so on).

The result is an elaborately varnished slovenliness offering a mode of existence well short of ideal, but still perfectly acceptable to most people in most circumstances. The only thing which can seriously threaten this way of life is military invasion from outside, for this puts incompetence and yawning to serious test. Zinoviev devalues many pages, both in *Yawning Heights* and *Anteroom to Paradise*, to the sufferings ordinary soldiers undergo when their commanders try to conduct real campaigns on the basis of familiar Ibsenian "flannel". In normal circumstances, however, the essential qualifications for leadership in Ibsen is mediocrity. Any real talent is a decided handicap, unless it be the talent for petty intrigue and the ruthless pursuit of narrow, selfish goals. The daily texture of social life is the struggle for food, clothes, housing, jobs, material goods, status and honours (most of which are in short supply owing to the officially sanctioned laziness and mediocrity).

One archetypal Ibsenian institution is the communal apartment, where people live in a collective square from which the only escape is to denounce one another, in the hope that a few judicious arrests will ease the congestion. The essential qualities of Ibsen are also epitomized in the humble, everyday office, which Zinoviev describes as a "self-regulating barracks" or "self-regulating concentration camp" (samokontrolnyy, samokontrolnyy). "Such an institution exists... so that several hundred people can live at its expense, kill their time there, expand their best feelings, and talents, and be allotted living space, holiday entitlement and other such benefits." Here again people observe, police and report on each other, because they are all in competition for the one office (the state being the only employer) for their precarious grip on a tolerable standard of living.

Notes of a Night Watchman, from which the last quotation comes, is devoted to the life of the hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birth, the thirty-fifth anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War, and so on).

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The View from Hakone

The world exploded: ash and atoms both.
But it was not: the world: only Japan.
And only part of that. It was a myth.
Under the myth, people once more began
To crawl through ashes, wreckage, poverty.
The fumes subsided. The volcano's breath
Exhaled on the horizon.

Stand here, see
This tiny spider chancing its puny death
On mud that bubbles half an inch below.
Coke-tins and plastic judder in the pool,
Boiling and rising.

Spring Pastoral, and so
The affluent crowd (young ones with Cool, Man, Cool
On sweatshirts) mill about, spill out from cars.
Enjoy the blossom, holiday, rich peace.
Try, Sony Carnival. There are no wars.
Only the TV Space War stuff, The Police
Throb from transistors, translated Pax
Nipponica. The red sun is unfurled.

Across the western sea, a billion backs
Bend to the four trends, tug the turning world.

Anthony Thwaite

such an office, whose ostensible purpose is significantly never even specified, so dominant is its social function as part of a patronage system. These Notes purport to be part of *Yawning Heights*, but in fact have a unity of their own, and present compactly the essentials of Zinoviev's outlook, so that the little book comprising them may be recommended, at least to readers of Russian, as a convenient introduction to his work. Those individuals who are not prepared to restrict their intellectual and spiritual lives to the confines of such an office are marked out automatically as suspicious. There is no need of a secret police to isolate and persecute them: their own colleagues, resentful of any departure from shared mediocrity, will accomplish that task perfectly well themselves. The KGB is therefore only a kind of concentrated essence of the spirit of collective envy which surrounds the gifted and eccentric.

Since the ideology exists to serve the interests of the ruling mediocrities and to give the illusion of dignity to the lives of the subject mediocrities, it does not stand or fall on its claims to scientific validity. Zinoviev once spent eight years of his life on a scientific analysis of Marx's *Das Kapital*, and abandoned the work because he felt that it was "an impossible and hopeless line of investigation". In a sense his current work represents a different line of approach to the same problem. As his night-watchman says: "I used to think there existed scientific studies of Ibsenism, but that Ibsenism itself was still far in the future, in fact it's the other way round. Full-scale Ibsenism has existed for ages... But there are no scientific studies of it at all." Zinoviev no longer criticizes Marxism theoretically, because it is invulnerable to such criticism: it is not a science, but an ideology. Its alliance with science is fortuitous, a tribute to our times, in which the phenomena of the universe happen to be interpreted in scientific categories rather than in those of, say, scholastic theology. In fact, Marxism is more like a religion than a science, though it lacks the subjective, spiritual element which is essential to religion. On the other hand, genuinely scientific study of communism as it has worked out in practice, in actually existing "socialist" societies (which Zinoviev holds have in fact already attained fully developed communism), would reveal a great deal, and this is undoubtedly one of the main aims of Zinoviev's writings.

In arguing that it is pointless to attack Marxism, Zinoviev is in more or less open polemic with Solzhenitsyn, who appears as Truth-teller in *Yawning Heights*. Attacks on Marxism, Zinoviev warns, tend to reproduce in negative the structures of the ideology, and thus to reinforce it in people's minds. To suggest renouncing the ideology (as Solzhenitsyn did in his Letter to the Soviet leaders of 1973) he sees as simply wishful thinking, given the key role it plays in the social structure. The Soviet leaders are themselves in the grip of their ideology; to make more than trivial modifications in it, let alone to abandon it, is quite beyond their power.

Yet Zinoviev is also in some ways immensely attracted by the forthrightness and integrity of Solzhenitsyn's stance, an admiration he has reiterated more than once in interviews with Western journalists. As Christopher says: "Truth-teller is a great child-man, who has suffered unjustly, cruelly and senselessly. He is problem number one of our times. He is something much bigger than ideology, politics and morality. He is the focal point where all the problems are concentrated. If only men could contrive to preserve all this long enough..."

This, last, rather enigmatic remark takes us to a novel point in Zinoviev's thinking. What he means, I think, is that Solzhenitsyn has somehow conserved enough of the past in him to stand as a living testimony to the degradation of the present, and perhaps to point towards a new ideal for the future. This aspect of Zinoviev's thought

Shall we join the ladies?

By John Lucas

GEORGE MEREDITH:
Diana of the Crossways
415 pp. Virago. £2.50
0 86068 138 6

GEORGE GISSING:
The Odd Women
336 pp. Virago. £2.50
0 86068 140 8

G. BERNARD SHAW:
An Unsocial Socialist
258 pp. Virago. £2.50
0 86068 134 3

M. G. WELLS:
Ann Veronica
295 pp. Virago. £2.50
0 86068 137 8

All generalisations are unsatisfactory, and I wouldn't claim the following as an exception to the rule: that towards the end of the nineteenth century a quickening number of novels began to appear which were devoted to what was often called "the woman question". Quite apart from *Diana of the Crossways* and *The Odd Women* there are also *Ann Veronica* and *Gissing's* *The Odd Women*, which fit the description: there's *Jude the Obscure*; Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* which produced a comic-critical response in *The Woman Who Didn't* by "Victoria Cross"; Mark Rutherford's *Clara Fawcett* and *Clara Fawcett*; and after the turn of the century we can point to novels by Bennett (*Leahurst*), Wells (*Ann Veronica*), and even Forster's *A Room With a View*. And as a conclusion which is no conclusion one might mention *Women in Love*.

Unsatisfactory, of course. After all, there had earlier been plenty of novels concerned with "the woman question", and there were to be many more later. Yet there's this much truth in the generalisation. "The novels mentioned treat this question with great self-consciousness and often give the impression of existing to do no more than supply various answers to it. And they have another thing in common. They were all written by men. Which inevitably prompts the question, why no women? In her famous essay of 1895, "Silent Novels by Lady Novelists," George Eliot had written that "A cluster of great names, both living and dead, rush to our memories in evidence that women can produce novels not only fine, but among the very finest—novels, then, that have precious specialties, lying quite apart from masculine aptitude and experience." Yet by the end of the century the great names all belonged decisively to the past. Olive Schreiner apart, for the present one had to make do with a consciousness of silence. In *The Silences*, George Eliot had characterised his various kinds, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Ouida, Marie Corelli, Elton John: no one looking for "a precious specialty". And if one goes to the works of Mrs Humphry Ward, who might be thought of as a serious novelist (though as Beerbaum's famous cartoon implies, possibly near the mark) one finds that she is firmly opposed to the new woman. *Diana of the Crossways*, published as late as 1915, shows her heroine as misguidedly engaged in suffragette activities—they include the burning down of a mansion from which she is rescued by marriage to a middle-aged magistrate who drives a motor car and plays croquet.

Why there should not have been any important fictions by women writers during this period is a fascinating but no doubt insoluble problem. Perhaps the finest answer was given by George Bernard Shaw in his introduction to *Diana of the Crossways* and *The Odd Women*. *Ann Veronica* and *Wells's* *Ann Veronica* suggest that Meredith's and Gissing's complex and guilt-ridden relationships with women may well be a partial explanation of their fictional concerns. Meredith's *John* who had left him for the painter Henry Wallis (there are very twisted ironies in the fact that Meredith had posed for Wallis's "Death of Chatterton"). Ms Sage remarks that Meredith's wife "had

been, it seems, her own woman, and had tempted him into a mean-spirited, envious and envious quest on analysing for the rest of his life". One product of this analysis is, of course, the great *Modern Love*; another is *Diana of the Crossways*. As for Gissing, "In life, his relationships with women were certainly confused and desperately unhappy". Yet as Ms Walters points out in her fine introduction, in *The Odd Women*, and especially in the central characters Rhoda Nunn and Mary Barfoot, "Gissing offers a radical challenge to women's prescribed and proscribed destiny". Rhoda, Gissing almost certainly takes the name from his admired Meredith's *Rhoda Fleming* (1865), a novel which ends with the cry "Help poor girls!" But the name had currency. A Rhoda Garrett set up an interior design business in 1872, the first such business to be run by a woman, and the frequently addressed Woman's Rights meetings. (Does the name have any connection with that tough, warlike Rhodolind whom Goudier eventually rejects for the more feminine Birtles, and who in Davenant's version is a bit too much for Goudier to handle?)

Guilt may certainly have its part to play in the creation of novels which deal with "the woman question". But it would be silly to think that one ought to make a generalised biographical link relating to particular authors. There's a more general sense of guilt may well be involved. Two years after the publication of *Rhoda Fleming* Isaac Baker Brown was expelled from the Obstetrical Society of London for practising chloroform. As Elaine Showalter has recently pointed out, this wasn't because doctors disagreed with Brown's diagnosis or the effectiveness of his method, but because various patients had protested that they'd been tricked and even coerced into the treatment. Some had even been told that they'd go insane if they didn't submit to surgery. For Brown and for others masturbation was the root cause of madness; and it had to be prevented because otherwise girls became restless and excited, and "indifferent to the social influences of domestic life". One hardly needs to spell out the "prescribed and proscribed destiny" that's implied in this way of helping poor girls. Nor the fact that among those who resist such a destiny are the Dianas of the world. Warwick, Diana, is true, married, but "Why she married, she never told. Possibly, in amazement at herself subsequently, she forgot the specific reason." I think that's right: Diana is easy to know, and this is mainly due to the fact that she isn't at all sure of herself, of what and who she wants to be. (Her story is partly based on the well-known life of Caroline Norton, sued her for divorce, and who had managed to combine a career in political and literary concerns.)

With surprising but genuine delicacy, Meredith establishes the ways in which Diana struggles to realise herself, making inevitable blunders but always fuelled by a determination to work out a destiny that she hasn't been forced on her. The same may be said of Rhoda Nunn. As Margaret Walters remarks, "there is no simple response to her". Like Diana, and like Hardy's Sue Bridehead, she is perplexed, torn, perplexed and torn very finely, especially in her relationship with Edward Barfoot, who is prepared either to live with her or to marry her, and whom she, in turn, rejects. To put the matter simply, it is perhaps for this reason that she is so sympathetic to the religious life. Both Shaw and Wells were Fabians, and both subscribed to the party line on sexual ethics. Wells's *Ann Veronica* was written only by Herbert Blomfield, and by comparison with *Diana of the Crossways* and *The Odd Women*, the novels of these which Virago have now reprinted seem fairly tame. Indeed, I am not at all clear as to

why *An Unsocial Socialist* should have been included in the present selection. Michael Holroyd's pointless introduction is no help. Holroyd appears to take the novel at face value. He says of its hero, Sidney Trefusis, that he is "Shaw's first socialist hero and Don Juan in whom he attempts to reconcile his social and political attitudes". We are supposed to believe that Trefusis leaves his first wife because he is sexually besotted with her and therefore unable to devote himself to the cause of socialism.

An *Unsocial Socialist* is a roman à clef, of a kind that occupies a minor but honourable place in English fiction during the later years of the nineteenth century. Its other important exponent, W. H. Mallock, wrote from a conservative point of view, and on the whole he did it a great deal better than Shaw. One might, I suppose, forgive the tedious chapter in which Shaw's hero, the young Fabian Pamphlet, (He has Trefusis explain to his wife that the reason he is leaving her is to help liberate the Manchester labourers out of whom his father made a fortune.) But Shaw's attitude to women in the novel is less forgivable. There is, for example, Agatha, the young girl who is to be Trefusis's second wife and of whom Shaw remarks that she prefers a novel to the study of pathology, "inasmuch as none of the emotions it described in the least resembled any she had ever experienced". And of another woman who is said to be in love with Trefusis, Shaw's hero thinks that "I have shaved her. . . . She shall learn a lesson or two to hand on to her children before she is allowed to breed". A wife understood, but she would not insist so much on her breeding. This is very much the kind of reflection to which Mallock's heroes are given, and it is what Cecil Vyse thinks of his rival, George Emerson, in *A Room With a View*. "The man was ill-bred, he hadn't put on his coat after tennis—he

didn't do." Quite why Trefusis should be given such unimpressively directed thought I am not a loss to understand. *An Unsocial Socialist* is poor stuff.

That can't be said of *Ann Veronica*. Wells takes his heroine seriously, and not simply because she is modelled on Amber Reeves, the brilliant young girl with whom he had recently fallen in love. The novel is one of a number of Edwardian fictions that are concerned with difficult parent-daughter relationships in middle-class families. Bennett's *Leahurst* (1903) is a good example, and would have been (perhaps will be?) an ideal novel for Virago to publish. Trapped in an unhappy marriage, Leahurst reflects that her children

though to outward semblance they had much freedom, had never listened to anything but "No, No, dear". "I think you had better not," and "Once for all, I forbid it." She wondered why this should be so, and why its strange, her father had not impressed her better. She had a distant, fleeting vision of a household in which parents and children behaved like free and sensible human beings, instead of like the virtuous and martyred puppets of a terrible system called "acting for the best".

This conflict is re-enacted in the opening chapter of *Ann Veronica*, ironically titled "Ann Veronica talks to her father", where we are given the following dialogue between the girl, who wants to go to a fancy-dress ball, and her father, who will not hear of it.

"Look here, daddy," she said in a tone of great reasonableness. "I must go to that dance, you know."

Her father's irony deepened. "Why?" he asked severely.

Her answer was not quite ready. "Well, because I don't see any reason why I shouldn't."

"You see, I do."

Ex silentio

By Michael Trend

PIERRE DE CALAN:
Cosmas, or the Love of God
Translated by Peter Hebblethwaite
180p. Collins. £5.95.
0 00 22211 7

La Trappe de Soligny is a Cistercian abbey in Normandy founded in 1140 and zealously reformed in the seventeenth century by Armand Jean de Rancé. It has given its name to a form of monasticism, the life of austerity and a penitential regime, which proved to be great incentives to the religious life. Trappists being particularly well known for their strict silence, Pierre de Calan's novel *Cosmas, or the Love of God*, translated by Peter Hebblethwaite, is based on the abbey. *Cosmas*—and this is most unusual for a novel on a religious theme—is not a vehicle for a particular theory, or position (as, for example, is *Reverend Father Amleto*, set at La Trappe). De Calan respects the traditions and practice of the monastery that he has known since his childhood, and with a direct simplicity has written a book that will be of great interest to anyone who is at all sympathetic to the religious life.

De Calan is a man whose life has been as eventful as the lives of monks are deliberately not. He has been vice-president of the Syndicat General de l'Industrie Cotonnière Française, president of Balc and Wilcox in France, and is now president in that country of Barclays Bank. He has previously published books on economic subjects and one volume of short stories. "Anyone who lives only for his work leads only a half life," he is quoted as saying in *Le Monde*. De Calan's introduction.

La Trappe and who is fascinated by it. The date is the years just before the last war. The main concern is the struggle of a young man, Cosmas, with his vocation, and the help and guidance given to him by Father Roger and the Abbot, Dom Philippe Jalluy. Cosmas comes to the Abbey convinced of his vocation but with a more or less unspoken doubt. He is quickly disillusioned by the realities of life at La Trappe and is sent away to consider his vocation in the light of the outside world. He comes back more certain than ever but before long he has more encounters, problems, and leaves the monastery again, this time of his own volition, causing great concern to his Novice Master and his brother monks. Cosmas remains clear, however, that his final place is at La Trappe and he is returning for a third time when he dies in the snow-bound countryside in circumstances that remain unclear.

"When he came to La Trappe his idealism made him imagine that we were disembodied spirits," writes the Novice Master. Cosmas lacked "the ability to accept human nature as it is, and the ability to accept the reality of the world." He is quick to show how even this archetypal mystic occasionally had to have his feet firmly on the ground. When writing about the life of a house to the Jesuits, John Cosmas does not trust the good fathers who "share their own interests at stake. If they mention to you that you are a saint, you get the contract signed immediately." But Cosmas is still possessed by the ideal and the Novice Master writes of him: "I didn't dare rush him. I didn't dare sleepwalk about how carefully he was working up to it. Through his whole life Cosmas remains faithful to La Trappe, and his fidelity and that of the monks is the theme of the novel. Cosmas is the monks' own guide, and even though he had not taken his vows."

The Abbot summarizes his view of Cosmas in these words: "But God uses other scales by which our poor human achievements are weighed. Our counts are very small. Our counts are very

"Why shouldn't I go?" "It isn't a suitable place; it isn't a suitable gathering." "But, daddy, what do you know of the place and the gathering?" "And it's entirely out of order; it isn't right; it isn't correct; it's impossible for you to stay in a hotel in London—the idea is preposterous. . . . you are a young child. You know nothing of its possibilities."

What's behind this is clear enough. And a very similar scene operates in *A Room With a View*, when Forster remarks of his heroine, Lucy Honeychurch, that she is a rebel of the kind he feared. Cecil Vyse, can't understand. "For what she desires is 'equality' with the man she loved," where Cecil's over-riding fault is that he has no glimpse of the comedy after which the girl's soul yearns!

Yet one feels of Bennett, of Wells and of Forster, that they have a certain easy confidence in being on the right side, and in seeing it triumph. And to imply that their novels take sides is to reveal these Edwardian fictions as a good deal simpler than those of Meredith and Gissing. They lack the psychological tensions, the *jeu d'esprit*, one piece of "Exhibitionist" travel, a family-and-suburbia series, and a few—the best, I think—that are unclassifiable. Quotations from Augustus, Plato, and a talk called "The Forces of Nature" are acknowledged and from "The Man Who Loved Extinct Mammals" you can learn a lot about *Urtinacanthum*, *Barlanbudi*, and *Diceratherium*. The Calvinistic conscience is back in operation, and the pervading sense of mortality: woman is loved as a sacred human goddess, free from such guilts: America the other love, its humdrum textures faithfully reproduced. Successful formulae appear again, and there are

Guilt-edged entanglements

By Rosemary Dinnage

JOHN UPDIKE:
Problems
260pp. André Deutsch. £5.95
0 33 97247 7

This is Updike's sixth collection of short stories, and (not counting children's books) his twenty-second in twenty-two years. Nevertheless he prefaces *Problems* with an author's note—"Seven years since my last short-story collection? There must have been problems!" and he offers it as the record of "a curve of sad time". Is there a sense of irony in his apology, of being one up on less fertile fellow-writers? In any case, this does seem a slightly sadder gathering than previous collections, sadder in the sense of a sad cake: stodgy, less crisp and airy and surprising. Perhaps we have come to expect too much variety and wit from Updike that we are disappointed if the magician does not produce new tricks each time round.

These are the same tricks, and performed with the same skill. There are a few pastiches and *jeu d'esprit*, one piece of "Exhibitionist" travel, a family-and-suburbia series, and a few—the best, I think—that are unclassifiable. Quotations from Augustus, Plato, and a talk called "The Forces of Nature" are acknowledged and from "The Man Who Loved Extinct Mammals" you can learn a lot about *Urtinacanthum*, *Barlanbudi*, and *Diceratherium*. The Calvinistic conscience is back in operation, and the pervading sense of mortality: woman is loved as a sacred human goddess, free from such guilts: America the other love, its humdrum textures faithfully reproduced. Successful formulae appear again, and there are

fewer of those stories that astonish by compressing whole strata of images and feelings into a small space, like a chip of rock. The linking theme throughout the book is divorce. (But so it is in all Updike's books—divorce from God, or childhood, or paradise.)

In "Nervida" a newly divorced husband picks up his daughters to drive them home from Reno while their mother is honeymooning. While he is taken up with obsessive thoughts of her, the eldest daughter is edging eagerly towards the wifely role. A teenage family has been told of coming separation, of how Mommy and Daddy do not quite make each other happy enough: one son, before going to sleep, blurts "Why?" "It was a whistle of wind in a crack, a knife thrust, a window thrown open on heat, and had to find a way out. A man settled with his second wife remembers the age of innocence before divorce as Pluto's Atlantis, a watery paradise for kings and queens."

A paradigm for the Updike divorce-in-suburbia story could be "Divorce in America". A man, between visits both to his wife as in *Museums and Women*, buildings, landscapes stand for woman. The home he has left is beautiful, "a serene and impressive structure from the outside, but the inside was cut up rather awkwardly, and hard to heat, and had to find a way out of its corner in"; there he could drive straight from his jetty into the creek, but now the second woman has become "that sustaining element, the water in the centre of the channel, which answered every demand of his with a silken resistance and buoyed him above its own black depth". There is a taut pull between the two women, indistinguishable deities among the house plants and breakfast cereals (Updike's women go to PTA meetings and fix the storm windows and quote Yeats, but never teach or doctor or type). There are the children; his, touchy and accusing; hers, regarding him politely, with

curiosity, like a section of the Sunday paper that was neither funny nor sports. There are two Christmas trees, one with familiar, cheap broken trimmings, the other with rare and pretty things that belong to another family's history. And the books that must somehow be divided: an impossible task, apart from the duplicates left from when they took the same college courses. He puts two volumes of Yeats side by side. Later when she says his quotation, a child is misled to look hopefully from one to the other. Things fall apart.

These are Updike's "guilt-gems", as he calls them in a story of that name, lovingly fondled and polished. "A guilt-gem is a piece of the world that has volunteered for compression." The treasure was of inestimable value. I prefer, I must admit, his fantastical-comical, metaphysical vein to the suburban adultery. Luckily he has not ceased to be a wit. Of an Ethiopian beauty: "Her blackness was the shade of time of the euteneism of Adam and Eve, a colour from which

the young American couple felt their own whiteness as a catastrophic falling-off, caused heteroskelos by the Northern climate, snow, camouflage, and the survival of the fittest." Of the pronouncements of a psychiatrist: "I was like golf on the moon. Even a chip shot sailed for miles." "The Fairy Godfathers" is not about a triangle but a rectangle; two lovers and their analysts. He, glowing in her analyst's approval of him. She, coming to life in his description of her to his analyst. When he kisses her, he is absorbing the magic analytic blessing. There is always something to talk about. And then they marry and buy a house and cannot afford analysts' bills, and live in terror ever after.

"The Egg Race" is the story most like *Les tours de force* of the earlier collections. The between-two-women, guilt-fondling hero this time is an archaeologist; as a master of extended metaphor, Updike plays with the notion of excavating the time of the euteneism of Adam and Eve, a colour from which

imagery underlies the story. The archaeologist Ferguson's father has died and Ferguson has dreamt, before waking with his new woman beside him, that father and son were travelling together on a carelessly spruce: "in the dream, the father's smile," said that his son was with him, would join him. And he visits a dying colleague in hospital, who criticizes Ferguson's last paper for relying on the evidence of one shard, which might have come from outside: "the dead were great travellers—never forget it." Ferguson, in limbo himself, travels on to a High School reunion in his home town and fogs for the shards of his own life. Profession? the class secretary asks him. "Digger." Last winter, I found a single shard that made thousands of skeletons move over. The story turns back to the memory of a childhood egg-and-spoon race that opened it—the dreadful precariousness of movement, the unreliability of the egg, and the narrator sees that he is triumphing carefully, delicately over the deaths, over his continuity in the race; he is held inside an eggshell of safety and at the same time holds his life, his only life, his incredibly own, that he must not let drop."

Changing faces

By Carol Rumens

DEBORAH MOGGACH:
A Quiet Drink
220pp. Collins. £5.95.
0 00 221678 7

The inhabitants of the London-suburban knotgarden in which Deborah Moggach's neat, charming, and in this particular sample, as a class down and a decade on. All are youngish, moderately personable and, while not rich, comfortable enough to be able to enjoy the luxury of affective individualism and a certain flexibility of role.

The narrative begins with Claudia brooding over her desertion by husband Adrian, a character whose facelessness the author rigorously sustains by only ever letting us glimpse him through the eyes of others. Claudia is prominently introduced as tall, freckled, independent, with "a certain job in the print world" (this turns out to be the production side of a *Cosmo*-type magazine, *Yours*). She is indeed a "left-handed lady", as the odd-job man observes, but her stylishness does not compare with that of Peter Hamble's hero and heroine, who becomes apparent that she badly needs a husband, or a lodger, or some other supportive male in her life; she is in fact just another insecure, starry-eyed user of the Libresse "It's-not-just-you-life-you're-changing" range of cosmetics.

Which brings us to Steve, slick-talking, bright but sensitive sales rep for these very products. Steve is becoming increasingly half-in and half-out of the picture, partly because of an encounter with a Green Earth "Save the Whales" campaign, with which he is roundly on the subject of sperm-counting, but partly because he is getting tired of June, who is a working-class girl who grew up in a family of heavy-metal males in a squalid Arncliffe Crescent and convincingly turns to floundered domesticity as her salvation. Steve is not so sure of her, her mind occasionally she slips to the language of *Yours* soap opera with clichés of the "actively lovely" variety.

June, recognizing the danger signals, touchingly embarks on a course of self-improvement at the public library where she is helped by a quiet, donnish young man who turns out to be Claudia's new beau, a clean gentleman. Mr Poulney has resided here for six years . . . no complaints" reads his ex-laudatory reference, which is enough to rouse anyone's suspicions as to the quality of the goods. Claudia is very inhibited about her feelings for Steve and Claudia are fated to meet when the author disposes, in separate contexts, that there is nothing that either of them enjoys better (well, almost

nothing) than a greasy plate of motorway service station nosh. But when they do converge it is in King's Road pub together with Bath and Adrian, and Moggach deftly performs her alienation trick, showing us the hot little emotional tangle through the dispassionate though curious eyes of one Dolly, a barmaid. It is chillingly effective.

The liberated lady who isn't really, the great love affair that's fast dwindling to a niggly marriage, the nautical fantasy beached in a Beckenham square chop—these are the ironies by which Moggach contrives both to amuse and depress her readers. She has a light touch with the solemnities of middle-class agiotage, too, whether of the whole grain or green earth variety. Verity (Claudia's earth-mother friend) and lecherous adman Wil ("a D. H. Lawrence in co-ordinated denim"), a pair heavily into organic farming and procreation in deepest Kent, are nicely mocked via offsprings who while incessantly for *Smarties* and chips.

Moggach enjoys a good coincidence, and even a not-so-good one, and her characters become increasingly detailed. Like the alienation device, this is mannered but effective. Claustrophobia builds up. The climax occurs when June injures

new from

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MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

Distant drums

By Galen Strawson

PAUL BREEZE:
Back Street Runner
280pp. Michael Joseph. £5.95.
0 718 1892 8

It is the sheer size of America that gives books like Kerouac's *On The Road* an epic quality. The novel may that divides into a thousand and sundries is a continent long, running east to Canada and Mexico beyond. So, too, the subject of a novel on the run in America has an immediate epic dimension. English equivalents are not only not epic in this way, but comically anti-epic, confined to this bounded life with its mild geography.

One of the strengths of *Back Street Runner* is to turn this smallness to dramatic account. After half a night on the run, the main character, Billy Dancy, is exhausted, the back alleys and industrial outskirts of Stoke, exhausted, and backtracking, getting nowhere. Billy Dancy, Paul Breeze's hero, breaks from the bushes onto a main road—only to find a huge road sign reading STOKES 2. In the whole book, he covers only the sixteen miles of his cramped, unheroic journey, and it is so powerfully if very baldly evoked by Paul Breeze, is the more dramatic for his "long littleness".

In Breeze's first novel, *While My Guitar Gently Weeps*, Billy Dancy, head guitarist of a group just vying to succeed, has the two vital fingers of his left hand smashed in a car accident. He is left with one hand for the guitar, his life is ruined. He goes down his acid-soaked and murderous path, his accented and (arguably) records his laboured, painful music as a run-of-the-mill drummer in a second-rate band. His guitar, too, to some extent, is a victim. Billy Dancy is a man who is very much a man, and his story is a story of a man who is very much a man.

Postscript: Inland 1347, August 1979. A second-hand copy of *Back Street Runner* was found in a bookshop in London. The book was in good condition, but the cover was worn and the title was faded. The book was found in a bookshop in London.

John Updike

by some notion of formalized pro-
"Wit" things improve with "Wit"
own aside. "Wit" him. He
announces the title in *Shakespeare*,
then adds to each up with
us, you know" in his own voice.
The audience loves that and he for-
gets to climb back into his poetry-
reading clothes. "One More Bre-
vity" touches ear and heart at
once. You come to love him almost
for himself alone, like Henry.
Then let's see "not 'hear'—
"some lightsome thing for an end-
ing", he proposes, and heads for
home with "A Considerable
Speck". But then he plunges back
into the middle of the end-of-per-
formance applause with "Birches"
as an encore. An entertainer's trick
even older than Frost, and a
dangerous one in this case since
"Birches" is not all that short—in
fact longer than "A Considerable
Speck"—and by the end he is
beginning to run out of dramatic
and vocal steam. But who cares?

The first part of the Auden tape
sounds very young and light after
Frost, and exaggeratedly English, a
bit startled and helpless—"Wander-
ing lost upon the mountains of our
choice" in his own eight words.
This is a studio recording made in
1941, while the second and longer
part is live, and Auden is twenty-
nine years older. The voice has
darkened a lot and the man behind
the voice is a bigger presence. He
says he is going to pause every few
minutes "so you can talk and I can
rest". These pauses, if they have
been edited out, but it is evident
now and then that he is short of
breath.

An enormous pause, however,
after announcing "Natural Linguis-
tics". Then some rustling and shuf-
fling noises. Another pause. Then
"It's disappeared!" So you see his
informality and sense of his audi-
ence is of the Frost, not the
Moore, still less the Williams kind.
It is a pleasant surprise, however,
the 1970 tape and less perplexing
than the 1941 one where some of
the poems do not appear in the 1976
Collected Poems or have been so
altered in the years between as to
be scarcely recognizable.

In terms of material, John Berry-
man is the best-shaped contribu-
tion of the thirteen. He confines
himself to the first *Dream Songs*
volume of 1964, and he is probably



Three Juliets: Julia Marlowe, c 1887 (left), Ellen
Terry, in 1882 (centre), and Patti Kempie, c 1830
(right). The pictures are chosen from a copy of
Juliets portrayed in Shakespeare: The Globe &
The World, by S. Schoenbaum (208pp. Folger
Shakespeare Library and Oxford University Press.
£12.50. 0 19 50264 5). A distinguished Shakespearean
critic, author of such books as *Shakespeare's
Lives* and *William Shakespeare: A Documentary
Life*, Professor Schoenbaum has been able to draw
on the resources of the Folger Shakespeare Lib-



rury for this beautifully illustrated book, designed
as its cover announces, to enlighten "anyone who
has ever wondered how the son of illiterates in a
small English town came to dominate the cultural
life of succeeding generations in virtually every
country in the world". Some two-thirds of the book
are devoted to Shakespeare's life: the rest is given
over principally to consideration of nearly 400
years of productions of his work, both as enacted
on stage, and as edited and printed in books. See
also the picture on page 572.

reading from manuscript since the
tape dates from 1962. He gives us
nineteen songs, beginning with the
first and ending with the last (77),
but shuffling the order in between
so as to make his selection achieve
what he calls "the unveiling of
Henry".

And he succeeds. Henry stands
revealed in and through politics,
religion, love ("or something
resembling it"), art, death: some-
times "seriously depressed" and
always with a certain resemblance,
conceded by the poet, to the poet.
Also—manuscript or not—Berry-
man reads each song as if he had
just composed it, almost as if he
were composing it, like Rubinstein
playing Chopin. He is less provi-
sional than some of the other live
performers, but as fresh as any,
and nobody manages to be as per-
sonal and there as he does in the
immediate funny-sad intelli-

gence of his voice. He says Saul
Bellow reads the songs better than
anyone else. That would be some-
thing to hear. He also wishes his
audience good luck before he
begins. In a sense they need it. His
art disturbs them. You can feel the
unease in their response.

Robert Lowell's audience isn't
comfortable either. But I think
that's because he spends too much
time discoursing in a rather wry
patrician way, with distinction and
great confidence, of course, but
running the risk of talking his
poems into the ground before he
reads them. His reading, when he
gets down to it, is very fine and an
admirable foil to Berryman's. Berry-
man is most and best himself
projecting the contrasty rhythms
and voices of Henry and his inter-
locutor.

I don't operate often. When I do,
per. ons take note.

Nurses look amazed. They pale.
The patient is brought back to
life, or so.
The reason I don't do this more (I
quote)
is: I have a living to fulfil—

because of my wife & son — to
keep from earning.
— Mr Bones, I see that.
They for these operations (thanks
you, what?)
not pays you. — Right.
You have seldom been so
understanding.
Now there is further a difficulty
with the light:

I am obliged to perform in com-
plete darkness
operations of great delicacy
on my self.
— Mr Bones, you terrify me.
No wonder they don't pay you.
Will you die?

From West Riding to West Coast

By Bernard Bergonzi

DONALD DAVIE:
Trying to Explain
213pp. Carcanet New Press. £6.95.
£5.95 343 4

The illustration on the jacket of
Donald Davie's new collection of
essays, *Trying to Explain*, is titled
"After: has been photographed
in action, at a certain moment, in
an open book, is propped up in
front of him. His head is a little to
one side, his expression indicates
concentration, patience, but a hint,
too, of exasperation: the right
light, the right camera, is his great
preoccupation. He is saying, this
clearly, is a man
trying, and trying very hard, to
explain something important, trying
to convey both the thing and its
importance."

The photograph is informative in
other ways, as well: the subject is
wearing a shirt that could only be
American, short-sleeved, baggy,
with two front pockets. And yet
the face does not look American;
square, earnest, sceptical, with fur-
rowed brow: these are not quite
native American features. Even the
hair does not altogether go with
the shirt. It would be claiming
too much to conclude that the sub-
ject must therefore be an English-
man, still less a Yorkshireman. But
knowing that Davie is both these
things, one can call the picture
emblematic. He writes as an Eng-
lishman who has lived and taught
in America for ten years, who is as
interested in American poetry as in
English, and in the relations be-
tween them, and whose discussion
is always from the point of view of
an English expatriate, never of an
American.

In an interview reprinted here,
Davie says of an earlier book,
Thomas Hardy and British Poetry,
"I never makes up the mind
whether it's hard, using the Ameri-

can reader of the British reader,
and part of the time it's castigating
the Americans for not being British
and the rest of the time it's castigat-
ing the British for not being Ameri-
can. A similar point could be
made about *Trying to Explain*,
though the note of castigation is
muted. In general the division of
nims is a source of insight rather
than of confusion.

Most of the essays were written
over the past few years and ap-
peared in American magazines,
so the book will be particularly
valuable to American readers, for
whom the contents will be unan-
ticipated. It includes review-articles
and occasional papers and lectures,
and is inevitably less substantial than
The Poet in the Imaginary
Museum, the large selection from
over twenty years' work that the
same publisher brought out in
1977. There is nothing here to com-
pare with such authoritative and
original essays as "Pound and
Eliot: A Distinction" or "Hardy's
Virgilian Euripides" in the earlier
volume. Nevertheless, the book is
full of interest and, as a whole,
untitled, as much by the author's
personality as by the recurrence of
themes and topics. As a critic,
Davie has always had a strongly
personal manner—veering in some
reviews of his later work towards
anything included in this book, or
the highly idiosyncratic and beyond
that to the sceptical—but this has
been checked by his belief in rigour,
and discipline and his dislike
of the merely or self-indulgently
subjective.

In *Trying to Explain* he is more
willing to present himself as a
tweeter than heretofore, notably in
the biographical essay called "A
West Riding Boyhood" and in two
interviews. In the essay Davie
describes frankly the sense of
obscurity that has accompanied
his career, his single boyhood, his
father was a small shopkeeper and
his mother a schoolteacher; they
were poor-bourgeois and Conservative
values, yet in his boyhood he was
told which he, overwhelmingly

working-class and Labour-voting.
As a boy Davie was early on afraid
of "rough boys" who wore jerseys
and caps, whereas he was one of
the genteel boys who wore
blouses; but he was taught not to
draw simple sociological conclu-
sions when one of the worst bullies
turned out to wear a blouse and
sandal. Davie's mother had a great
passion for poetry and knew most
of the *Golden Treasury* by heart.
These revelations complement
Davie's more autobiographical phases
of cultural history: the childhood
experiences of the young Lawrence
and the young Wells. Davie writes
eloquently about his debt to his
mother:

If I am so literary myself that I
sometimes despair of breaking
through a cocoon of words to
reach all my mother's doing.
And I am grateful if my uni-
verse is verbal so be it—I am
happy in my glittering envelope,
and will fight those who would
diminish it.
In the two interviews, both
recorded at Stanford in 1977, Davie
talks about his life as a poet, critic
and teacher, and the problems and
opportunities arising from his
particular Anglo-American situa-
tion. The British critic, he acknow-
ledges, is more likely to write with
a degree of unbuttoned trench-
ancy, sharpness, a frank avowal of
a personal reaction. In English
much more common in English
reviewing than in American. This
is certainly true of Davie's own
reviewing, and one of the things I
most appreciate about his writing is
that of a man who despite living
in an age when what he under-
stands by civilisation is in real
danger of collapsing can still write
with actual readers in mind, in the
able to communicate is pos-
sible. So the voice is personal, and
the prose is, as usual, clear and
direct. It is hard to see how
this, in a way, is a personal inter-
view of the mind of the American

graduate schools who seem to write
primarily for themselves and for
other, and for their bearded stu-
dents. In this respect, at least, the
superiority of English practice is
self-evident, and it is exemplified
throughout Davie's book.

Trying to Explain includes
several pieces on American poets;
Allen Tate, John Berryman,
Robert Lowell, Ed Dorn, and
John Peck. There is a short
piece on Dylan Thomas, a review-
article on Andrew Sinclair's bio-
graphy of Thomas, which manages
to get in an urbane and definitive
judgment: "Thomas's
gifts were very great; but he used
them to achieve effects which are,
though powerful, artistically
coarse. A taste for them is a taste
that cannot be reconciled to the sub-
tleties and delicacies of the best of
Thomas's forerunners and contem-
poraries." An American is not
likely to have expressed himself in
this way, unless it were Ivor
Winters, of whom Davie speaks
with respect in one of the inter-
views. But Davie is a critic of far
greater generosity and flexibility
than Winters. No less than six essays
are devoted to the poet whom Davie
has seen for nearly thirty years as,
variously, a companion, patron
saint, influence, model, and an
adversary of how to do certain
things and how not to do others.
Ezra Pound. Some of these
essays—such as "Stilly in the
Capitol"—are exercises in the fine-
ground exegesis that Pound schol-
arship easily generates, and of cor-
respondingly limited interest. But
the rest are of a different kind, and
of a different quality. Pound and
the English. Davie engaged
with questions that have great exis-
tential significance for him.

Why, after playing a central part
in English literary life for so long,
did Pound abandon England so
completely? (Or was the abandonment,
in fact, as total as it appeared?)
Davie's discussion is relevant to
Pound and relevant to Davie also,
and to the question of how an Ameri-
can can be a part of English literary
life. In his discussion of Pound, Davie
introduces himself: "This is a
Platonic reading of his poem, by
13th, 1958." She is by herself at
studio and in two recording ses-
sions delivers sixteen short poems.

She has a tendency to read like
a reciting child, and to read
about ten, very little, or none.
These authors, in their own life-
time, only Durkheim thought of
himself primarily as a "sociologist".
They have only become appropri-
ated as the "founding fathers"
of sociology at some remove.

Why is there no 1890-1920
generation of English-speaking
writers, accorded the same esteem
today as their Continental coun-
terparts? What accounts for the in-
feriority of the home-grown prod-
ucts in Britain and the United
States? One of the answers is
surely to be found in the complex
of social and political thought in
the Anglo-Saxon countries, a con-
tinuity which reflected the rela-
tively unpermeated development of
the nineteenth century. The Anglo-
Saxon world had their "bourgeois
revolutions" early. Each managed
to contain or accommodate to the
rising pressure of the labour move-
ment without serious threat of revo-
lutionary violence; and in neither
case did Marxist parties of any con-
sequence come into being. The chal-
lenge of Marx and of Marxism did
not have to be met, nor the equally
promotive problems of irrationalist
conservatism. The result was that
social and political thought in the
Anglo-Saxon world did not exactly
remain in a state of torpor in the
1890-1920 period. It was not stimu-
lated to undergo a fundamental re-
examination. Utilitarian liberalism,
in conjunction with neo-Darwinian
evolutionary thought, continued to
dominate the scene. Spencer was
not surpassed.

At this point, however, we have
recognised some rather significant
differences between the develop-
ment of social and political thought
in Britain and the United States.
For it is true that the United
States did not produce an "1890-
1920" thinker of the stature of
here, of the Continental authors,
there was nonetheless at that period
a group of writers of self-
consciously "sociological" bent
whose work probably outstripped
that of their contemporaries in
Britain. Moreover, they helped
sociology to "take off" in the
United States, becoming a recog-
nized sub-area in the major
universities, in a way which was not
reproduced in Britain until some
forty years afterwards—if indeed it
has yet been achieved.

These writers have never quite
been forgotten by later American
sociologists to the same degree that
Spencer has been in Britain. There
are few systematic studies of them
as a group, however, and this new
book by Roscoe Hinkle, which sets
out to provide such a study, pro-
motes a scheme for both classifying
and periodizing "sociological" theo-
ries. The period he fastens on is not
1890-1920, but something very close
to it: 1881-1915, 1881 is not an arbi-
trary date: it is the year in which
Sumner, one of the seven major
figures he is concerned with, pub-
lished his first articles of some
importance on the nature of sociol-
ogy as a "science of society". Be-
sides Sumner, Hinkle concentrates
his attention upon Ward, Cooley,
Rose, Small, Cooley and Keller. In
terms of the attention commanded
by their publications, and their pro-
fessional influence in the emergent
discipline of sociology, these men
achieved a pre-eminent position in
their generation."

Before developing his scheme of
analysis, Hinkle considers the con-
text in which the writings of his
chosen authors were produced. If the
United States in the late nineteenth
and early twentieth centuries was
not a society threatened by revolu-
tion, it was still a society undergoing
a considerable process of social
change, associated with the burgeon-
ing of industrialization and urban-
ization. These processes coincided
with, and were fuelled by, large-scale
immigration, most of it coming
from Europe. The social scientists
were thus, preoccupied with the prac-
tical issues of poverty, unemployment,
crime and racism. But they did not
see these, as many of their contem-
poraries in Continental Europe did,
against a background of class con-
flict or divisions pitting capital
against labour. Rather, they saw
them as a congeries of "social prob-
lems" that could in principle be re-
solved within the "rationalized"
system of American society, and for
the most part they upheld an opti-
mistic belief in evolutionary social

Social problems and natural laws

By Anthony Giddens

ROSCOE C. HINKLE:
Founding Theory of American
Sociology 1881-1915
380pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£14.50.
0 7100 0401 X

The writings of what is sometimes
called the "1890-1920 generation"
of European social thinkers—
Durkheim, Max Weber, Simmel,
Parsons and the rest—are common-
ly regarded as marking a watershed
in the development of sociology.
The major works of these authors
were written at a time of vertigin-
ous economic and political change
in western Europe, and of
the expansion of both radical mili-
tancy on the Left, and aggressive
nationalism on the Right. The
influence of Marx, and of the early
formation of socialist parties,
loomed large for all of them. Their
lives, one could say, were wedged
between the events of the Commune
and the onset of the First World
War. For the most part, they
attempted to steer a way politically
between the poles of Left and
Right, while recognizing that utili-
tarian liberalism had lost its rele-
vance to the era in which they
lived. These authors, in their own
time, only Durkheim thought of
himself primarily as a "sociologist".
They have only become appropri-
ated as the "founding fathers"
of sociology at some remove.

Why is there no 1890-1920
generation of English-speaking
writers, accorded the same esteem
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terparts? What accounts for the in-
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terms of the attention commanded
by their publications, and their pro-
fessional influence in the emergent
discipline of sociology, these men
achieved a pre-eminent position in
their generation."

It was a view, Hinkle
points out, which accorded well with
the major American values, and
hence helped to find sociology a
place in the curriculum at a time of
major growth in the American uni-
versities. Unlike the situation in
Europe, the main early growth peri-
od of the American universities
coincided with the formalization of
sociology in the hands of Sumner
et al. Each of the group, with the
exception of Ward, enjoyed a suc-
cessful academic career at a major
university.

In attempting to classify or
schematize the writings of the early
American sociologists, Hinkle dis-
tinguishes two main dimensions
in which their work may be
categorized. He calls these, in a
cumbersome enough way, the
"social epistemological-methodologi-
cal domain" and the "social-ontologi-
cal domain". The first, but in
other words, is to do with what kind
of knowledge the various theorists
believed sociology could and should
yield; the second concerns how the
subject-matter of sociology, "the
social" should be conceptualized.

According to Hinkle, behind the
apparent diversity of works which
his group of authors penned, there
can be discerned some common
threads in the ways in which most
of them approached these matters.
Their epistemological conceptions
of social analysis, for the most
part less sophisticated than their
substantive or "social-ontological"
discussions of human society. Most
of the group took for granted the
sort of positivistic conceptions of
social analysis that dominated social
and political theory in Europe.
Sociology was considered to share
the same broad logical framework
as the natural sciences, its object
being to discover laws of social
behaviour, and to explain the nature
of social change. Giddens remarks
that "natural laws are simply unchang-
ing relations among forces, be they
physical, psychological or social".
As Hinkle points out, they did not
develop this idea with much subtlety
or depth, or always in a self-consis-
tent way.

Cooley was an exception to this
positivist consensus, and an interest-
ing one. Cooley stands out from the
others as a more complex and inno-
vative writer. He was a critic of
positivist views, arguing that, in
his words, "prediction and control"
of human behaviour are the object
of sociological analysis is a "false
ideal inconsiderately borrowed from
the provinces of physical science".
While we can hope to discover
generalizations about human social
conduct, these do not have the
mechanical inevitability of laws of
nature. Cooley advocated a kind of
creative version of *Verstehen*, in
which the social analyst attempts an
"imaginative reconstruction" of
the thoughts and feelings of others
in attempting to explicate why they
act as they do.

So far as their substantive
accounts of human society go,
Hinkle argues, the dominant view
among the group was one of what
he calls "evolutionary naturalism"
—although they offered varying ver-
sions of this. Their ideas were
strongly influenced by notions bor-
rowed from the model of biological
evolution, interpreted in a unified
way as a movement from "primi-
tive" or "simpler" peoples to the
complex societies of the West. The

influence of Spencer appears strong
here, particularly on Ward, Gid-
dins and Small. One more
Cooley's views appear more interest-
ing and insightful than those of the
others. He placed special stress on
language and communication as dis-
tinguishing features of human social
life, in the simpler as well as the
more complex societies of human
beings, he argued, lack instincts, and
are distinguished by their mallo-
ability in respect of different forms
of cultural experience. In the inter-
pretation of social change he em-
phasized neither "adaptation to the
environment", nor the "struggle
for survival" favoured by several
of the others with their Social Dar-
winist leanings. Rather, he stressed
that there is a continual interplay
between tradition, knowledge and
innovation in the articulation of
social change.

Hinkle concludes his book with a
discussion of continuities and dis-
continuities in American sociology
since the First World War, which, as
in Europe, brought this particular
period of sociological thought to a
close. He does not undertake to
describe or explain in any detail
why new trends of development
predominated in American sociol-
ogy following the war. Certainly
it was no longer easily
possible for intellectuals to maintain
with any degree of assurance that
social progress was an inevitable
process. Many came to distrust al-
together the type of "grand theoriz-
ing" which was the characteristic
style of the generation of Sumner
and the others. This disillusionment,
Hinkle implies, was one of the fac-
tors which promoted a retreat on the
part of many into a preoccupation
with detailed empirical research and
with quantification for its own sake,
stripped of theoretical insight. But it
is not really his brief to explain
this, nor the further changes that
have intervened in American sociol-
ogy over the past half a century or
so. The final chapter, which surveys
these changes very patchily, is rather
disappointing: one feels the author
should perhaps either have excluded
it altogether, or turned it into a
more comprehensive discussion.

I found this a valuable book, and
a thought-provoking one. In the
light of the questions I raised
earlier in this review, Hinkle does
succeed in displaying, within a
relatively short compass, something
of the unity of approach which
characterized the "first genera-
tion" of American sociologists.
The approach he adopts allows him
to bring out, in a systematic and
readily understandable way, just
where their theories overlapped,
and where they diverged. But there
is a price to be paid for this. The
style is often rather awkward, and
it is difficult for the reader to
piece together the views of any
one thinker among the group, since
their writings are dismembered for
purposes of classification. More-
over, Hinkle's analysis of the con-
text, socio-political and intellectual,
from which early American sociol-
ogy emerged seems to me wanting
in certain respects. The discussion
of context which prefaces the bulk
of the study is useful for guiding
the reader, but it does not really
show why the writings of his
authors took the form they did,
nor does it consider the possible
ideological implications of their
views. The Schwundingers' critical
study of the development of Ameri-
can social and political theory,
The Sociologists of the Chair, is
rather abruptly dismissed as
oriented to other objectives. Main
Hinkle's own work. Such is surely
not the case.

How much of lasting value is to
be found in the ideas of the "1890-
1920 generation" of American
sociologists when looked at from
the perspective of today? Hinkle
does not confront such a question,
although it seems from various of
his comments that he regards these
writings as of more than merely
archaeological interest. Certainly no-
one can doubt that the writings of
the American authors stand up well
beside those of many Continental
writers who were seen as leading
sociological thought in their own
time, but have for some while been
consigned to oblivion. Who today
reads Schaffle, Gumplowicz or
Tarde?

Cardiac Department

Discrete, disconsolate.
The heart patients gather in the waiting room,
Drawn together, but facing apart
And thinking about their ECGs.

They'd like to pretend
They're in the buffet at King's Cross
Waiting for the 6.15:
But more serious matters are at stake:
Life insurance, or life itself.

The nurse is their mother here;
Her smiles flow out
Bright and inextinguishable as conjurers' blinings.

The cleaner is having a mysterious mid-morning clean,
"Don't move, I can dust round you"
"Don't move, I can dust round you"

Comme Bensley

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self contemptuously loose from everything of which he at-homus—themselves, desperate affairs enough were part.

Shaw, incidentally, had a theory about Speranza's massive physique: by common poverty. In 1888 Oscar got her a grant of £100 from the Literary Fund; he was also instrumental in getting her a Civil List pension of £70 a year "for services to literature." But it was not enough. One of her fondest friends, the American-born Comtesse de Bremond, had noticed that the knocker on the door of 116 Park Street was unpainted, "rusty"; the Irish maid who opened the door was likewise, though very welcoming.

It is probable that the Park Street rent was not being paid; at any rate, in the late 1880s, when Speranza was in her mid-sixties, she moved with her Irish servant, a maid named Clara, to what was then No 146. Both her sons were married, though Oscar and his wife Constance, whom Speranza loved and pitied (Oscar neglected her so) were not far away, in Tite Street.

The Oakley Street house was even smaller than 116 Park Street, and Speranza herself was getting larger and larger. She kept up her Saturday salons. At the beginning they were as crowded as ever, even if the guests were less distinguished. The Comtesse de Bremond attended loyally.

The door at the top of the flight of steps was wide open. No servant being there, she went to knock. I followed the stream of callers. A difficult task, as the narrow hall was quite packed. Finally I reached the door of the reception room, and stood there, unable to advance or recede.

When her eyes grew used to the gloom the Comtesse made out the figure of her hostess: "In the semi-darkness Lady Wilde loomed up majestically, her headress, with its long streamers and glittering jewels, giving her a queenly air. The guests included 'long-haired poets and short-haired novelists, smartly dressed press women, and not a few richly gowned ladies of fashion'."

Another guest, Catherine Hamilton, who went on one December Saturday in 1889, observed that Speranza had not lost the art "de faire un salon". She could still make her guests comfortable and happy. "What matter that the rooms were small, that the tea was a little better than there was a large hole in the red curtains? Here was a woman who understood the art of entertaining. . . . Thoroughly sympathetic, she entered into the aspirations of everyone who ever held a pen or touched a penholder."

The hole in the curtain was a pretence of visitors ebb and flowed. Speranza mistakenly kept her salon open, almost no-one came, and those that did were mainly lonely Irish expatriates. "The handful of callers contrasted mournfully with the roomful of clever people one meets there in the season." Yet this gave him the opportunity to hear her talk, "and London has few better talkers."

When one listens to her and remembers that Sir William Wilde was in his day a famous raconteur, one finds it in no way wonderful that Oscar Wilde should be the most finished teller of our time. . . . Patriotism still burned within her. Frank Herlihy Street on Park Lane, "the man of destiny," who would strike off the fetters and free Ireland, and throne her as Queen among the nations." (This hope, like so many of Speranza's, was to be shattered with the coming of the century.)

It was not to be. Even the Comtesse de Bremond had noticed the subtle change in the atmosphere of the dim old room. . . . There was no longer the joyous spirit of intellectual camaraderie that had made the dining surroundings bright with the interchange of wit. Lady Wilde no longer shone forth in her wonderful brilliant manner.

"The woman of the future," she announced, "will never again be the mere idol of a vain worship," but "man's equal and co-worker."

Poor Speranza was shocked not by any man's "vain worship" but by common poverty. In 1888 Oscar got her a grant of £100 from the Literary Fund; he was also instrumental in getting her a Civil List pension of £70 a year "for services to literature." But it was not enough. One of her fondest friends, the American-born Comtesse de Bremond, had noticed that the knocker on the door of 116 Park Street was unpainted, "rusty"; the Irish maid who opened the door was likewise, though very welcoming.

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ing Speranza in "a tiny house in an obscure street" (which is a little unfair to Oakley Street) and went on:

The gas was presumably turned off, for the hall was pitch dark, and the drawing-room—some eight feet square—into which the miserable slavey conducted us, was lit by three tallow candles. But the strange figure that rose to greet us entered received us with the grand air. . . . In her day she must have been a beautiful and stately woman; she was still stately, heaven knew, but her old face was gaunt and grey, and crossed lines, etched by care, sorrow, and, no doubt, hunger. Her dress was a relic of the sixties, gray satin trimmed with ragged black fringe over a large hoop-skirt. As her hair was black, it was probably a wig. . . .

This is a glimpse of Speranza off-stage, unimpaired, vulnerable: it was not a Saturday. Gertrude Atherton's companion on this visit was the malicious Miss Corkran of Dublin days. One is not surprised to find that no one had married her. The two women had brought Speranza a cake: "She received it gratefully, but put it aside without a glance."

Speranza frequented the pawnshop; she sold off some of her books. But even there she did with style; she received the book dealer from her throne and told him with hauteur that she would accept "whatever you wish to offer." Oscar did pay her rent, by cheque

he has so little time now for me that he wishes to have me all to himself."

Oscar was still devoted to Speranza—or rather, to his idea of her. He always romanticized, as she did, her past, exaggerating to his friends the glamour of her origins and early life in Ireland. "You would imagine from his manner," wrote spiteful Alfred Douglas, "that she was a grande dame of the first water with two or three large places to her name and estates of servants." The first five years of the 1890s were years of famine and fortune for Oscar: he was making about £10,000 a year just before the disaster, while his mother, eccentric, underfed and lonely, sat in the dark in Oakley Street—reality that tallied ill with his picture of her as ranking "Intellectually with Elizabeth Barrett Browning and historically with Madame Roland." Perhaps it was just easier not to go to Oakley Street too often.

Speranza frequented the pawnshop; she sold off some of her books. But even there she did with style; she received the book dealer from her throne and told him with hauteur that she would accept "whatever you wish to offer." Oscar did pay her rent, by cheque



Harry Furness's view of Speranza and her uncouth husband, Sir William Wilde.

Poor thing, no doubt she devoured it whole as soon as we left."

The room was close and stuffy, the furniture as antiquated as herself; the springs could not have been mended for forty years. She talked to Herbert (Corkran) in a weak quavering voice, mainly of the triumphs of her exiled son, though she devoted back to the poet when she had been one of the lights of Dublin with her literary and political salon. . . . But to her present circumstances she made no allusion, and the walls seemed to expand into the dingy parlor because a great salmon-colored curtain, and the rotten fabric of her rag-bag covering turned by a fairy's wand into cloth of gold.

But the dream faded. "Once more, she was a laboriously built-up old woman who subsisted mainly on indigestible cake contributed by the few friends who remembered her existence." . . . The saddest thing of all was that her exiled son, Oscar, stopped coming to her "salons" . . . she was very "tired of him," she said Gertrude Atherton. "He is so busy." And to his closest friend, Gertrude Atherton, she said: "Oscar does not come when I have people here. He is so very much occupied with his work."

direct to the landlady; while Speranza herself haggled with the landlady about dirt and damage, which included cross-spots on the carpets.

D. J. O'Donoghue, compiler of the Dictionary of Irish Poets, went to Oakley Street in the last days, commenting, as everyone did, on the "general ravine . . . which the dingy light quite failed to conceal." "And what," he wrote, "later on, the crash came, everyone who knew them sympathized most with the mother, who was so fondly proud of her son, and the expression one heard most frequently was, 'Poor Lady Wilde'."

Oscar was arrested in 1895. When he was released on bail in May, no hotel would take him. He went to his mother in Oakley Street. His brother Willie, broke as usual, was living there with his second wife (a Miss Lees from Dublin). When Yeats called with letters of sympathy and support for Oscar, it was Willie who received him, unceremoniously drunk and garrulous. During the trial Oscar said: "My poor brother writes to me that he is defending me all over London; my poor dear brother, he could compromise a man."

as her *Athenaeum* editor said, "was assailed by the family crises, was unshaken. It is said she insisted on believing in for her he was innocent, no matter what he did. In August 1895, when she received news of him charged with the murder of a woman, she wrote to me, 'I am very poor and unable to leave my room.' She had hoped to hear from him; but I have not had a line from him, and I have written to him as I dread my letter being returned."

Earlier, before the trial, when some of his friends were urging him to leave the country, she said to him: "If you stay, you will go to prison, you will always my son, it will make no difference to my affection, but if you go, I will never speak to you again." Speranza, an am very poor and unable to leave my room. She had hoped to hear from him; but I have not had a line from him, and I have written to him as I dread my letter being returned."

By 1947 Britain's Palestine policy had virtually disintegrated. Bevin, Attlee, the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff were categorically opposed to partition, believing it incompatible with British strategic needs and fearing as they did an Arab revolt in Palestine and the neighbouring countries.

The British Government were convinced that the Arabs had the power to ruin Britain's Middle Eastern position; and they profoundly misunderstood the traumatic impact of the Nazi holocaust on the Palestine Jewish and American Jewish policy-makers also. . . . British policy-makers also decided themselves to think that after the war Jewish refugees would return to or be content to remain on the Continent. At the same time they were unable to control the flood of Jewish immigration to Palestine and in trying to enforce a rigid, unworkable policy were led into disastrous political mistakes. The expulsion of the illegal ship Exodus to Germany in the summer of 1947 and the international condemnation it aroused symbolized the final bankruptcy of British rule.

A main factor in Britain's decision to leave Palestine was American pressure and intervention. Though Bevin vainly sought to coordinate Anglo-American policy on Palestine, neither he nor his Foreign Office and military advisers took sufficient account of President Truman's concern about the fate of the Jewish refugees in Europe. Truman's demand for the immediate immigration to Palestine of 100,000 Jewish Displaced Persons was seen in London as an intolerable interference with British efforts to reach a compromise settlement and an undermining of the alliance by which Britain was increasingly dependent in the post-war world. Truman's Palestine policy was not only a source of embarrassment and constant irritation to the British Labour Government but also to his own State Department officials. They were more inclined than the Foreign Office to sympathize with the humanitarian imperatives, and domestic political considerations which impelled the American President to support partition and the creation of an independent Jewish State.

The turbulent history of the British Mandate has already produced a voluminous literature, yet many old myths and conspiracy theories still persist. Nicholas Bethell's admirably balanced narrative picks up the story in 1935, a watershed in Anglo-Zionist relations. In the Anglo-Zionist pact, the British Mandate for Palestine was not only a source of embarrassment and constant irritation to the British Labour Government but also to his own State Department officials. They were more inclined than the Foreign Office to sympathize with the humanitarian imperatives, and domestic political considerations which impelled the American President to support partition and the creation of an independent Jewish State.

- 1 Anna, Comtesse de Bremond, *Oscar Wilde and His Mother* (London, 1911). One of the quotations by the Comtesse de Bremond are from the same book.
- 2 Brian de Bureff, "Speranza: The Mother of Oscar Wilde," *The Irish Ancestor*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1971.
- 3 Horace Wyndham, *Speranza* (London, 1951).
- 4 Gertrude Atherton, *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* (London, 1930).
- 5 Harry Furness, *Speranza* (London, 1930).
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- 7 Letter from Shaw to Sir William Wilde, 1930.
- 8 Gertrude Atherton, *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* (London, 1930).
- 9 Luther Munday, *A Chronicle of Friendship* (T. Werner Laurie, 1932).
- 10 David Cecil, *Max* (London, 1964).
- 11 Wyndham, *Speranza*.
- 12 Idem.
- 13 W. B. Yeats, *Autobiography* (Macmillan, 1955).
- 14 Gertrude Atherton, *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* (London, 1930).
- 15 D. J. O'Donoghue, *The Irish Poets* (London, 1971).
- 16 Yeats, *Autobiography*.

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NICHOLAS BETHELL: *The Palestine Triangle: The Struggle between the British, the Jews and the Arabs 1935-48* 240pp. André Deutsch. £7.95. 0 253 97069 X

EVAN M. WILSON: *Decision on Palestine: How the US Came to Recognize Israel* 240pp. Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press. \$14.95. 0 8179 7187 5

EDWARD W. SAID: *The Question of Palestine* 306pp. Guilford and Kegan Paul. £2.50. 0 7100 0498 2

JOEL S. MIGDAL: *Palestine Society and Politics* 306pp. Guilford: Princeton University Press. £11. (Paperback, 1970) 0 681 07615 4

In June 1919 David Ben-Gurion told the Provisional Council of the Jews of Palestine: "There is no solution to this question. No solution. There is only one solution. We must fill this land with Jews. We are a nation, want this country to be ours; the Arabs, as a nation, want this country to be theirs." Six decades later, though the Arab-Israeli conflict no longer seems as hopelessly intractable as it once did, the question of Palestine continues to arouse intense passions on both sides. Four Arab-Israeli wars have failed to resolve the issue and bring about peace. Nevertheless, since President Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem there has been a qualitative change in the Arab-Israeli relations. The first beginnings of a dialogue that may yet transcend the endless cycle of bloodshed and violence. This may therefore be a propitious moment to reassess the roots of the Jewish-Arab confrontation in Palestine, which entered its most intense phase with the Balfour Declaration of November 1917.

The turbulent history of the British Mandate has already produced a voluminous literature, yet many old myths and conspiracy theories still persist. Nicholas Bethell's admirably balanced narrative picks up the story in 1935, a watershed in Anglo-Zionist relations. In the Anglo-Zionist pact, the British Mandate for Palestine was not only a source of embarrassment and constant irritation to the British Labour Government but also to his own State Department officials. They were more inclined than the Foreign Office to sympathize with the humanitarian imperatives, and domestic political considerations which impelled the American President to support partition and the creation of an independent Jewish State.

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Soundings in the gulf

By Robert Wistrich

and the British counter-measures which they provoked. Having interviewed many of the participants—politicians, soldiers, policemen and underground fighters—he is able to provide new evidence about the activities of Lord Moyne and the King David Hotel Affair. He possibly overestimates the impact of Jewish terrorism in the struggle against the Mandatory regime, though there is no denying that the hanging of the two British sergeants by the Irgun was seen by many as the last straw which made the British finally decide to leave Palestine.

By 1947 Britain's Palestine policy had virtually disintegrated. Bevin, Attlee, the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff were categorically opposed to partition, believing it incompatible with British strategic needs and fearing as they did an Arab revolt in Palestine and the neighbouring countries.

The British Government were convinced that the Arabs had the power to ruin Britain's Middle Eastern position; and they profoundly misunderstood the traumatic impact of the Nazi holocaust on the Palestine Jewish and American Jewish policy-makers also. . . . British policy-makers also decided themselves to think that after the war Jewish refugees would return to or be content to remain on the Continent. At the same time they were unable to control the flood of Jewish immigration to Palestine and in trying to enforce a rigid, unworkable policy were led into disastrous political mistakes. The expulsion of the illegal ship Exodus to Germany in the summer of 1947 and the international condemnation it aroused symbolized the final bankruptcy of British rule.

A main factor in Britain's decision to leave Palestine was American pressure and intervention. Though Bevin vainly sought to coordinate Anglo-American policy on Palestine, neither he nor his Foreign Office and military advisers took sufficient account of President Truman's concern about the fate of the Jewish refugees in Europe. Truman's demand for the immediate immigration to Palestine of 100,000 Jewish Displaced Persons was seen in London as an intolerable interference with British efforts to reach a compromise settlement and an undermining of the alliance by which Britain was increasingly dependent in the post-war world. Truman's Palestine policy was not only a source of embarrassment and constant irritation to the British Labour Government but also to his own State Department officials. They were more inclined than the Foreign Office to sympathize with the humanitarian imperatives, and domestic political considerations which impelled the American President to support partition and the creation of an independent Jewish State.

Reading Evan Wilson's account of how the United States came to recognize Israel one understands better the saying that foreign policy is too serious a matter to leave to the diplomats. A retired foreign service officer who worked in the Near East Division of the State Department during the 1940s, Mr Wilson has written a well-researched book on America's Palestine policy under Roosevelt and Truman. *Decision on Palestine* is remarkably detached, sober and scholarly in tone. We are transported far from the turmoil and bloodshed of the Palestine imbroglio into the orderly world of the desk men with their expert opinions, memoranda, policy papers and endless attempts to square or triangulate the circle. This is an insider's book, demonstrating an intimate knowledge of the decision-making process in the United States and giving a reasonably clear picture of the conflicting pressures which determined American policy on Palestine. Essentially, Mr Wilson believes, the pro-Zionist approach was victorious because all major American opinion-makers understood the wishes of the Palestine Arabs, who issued the Balfour Declaration at the zenith of this country's imperial self-confidence. No doubt, too, Zionism may have benefited from the common tendency in the West to regard the Arab Orient as a blank space to be filled, a wilderness to be redeemed by the colonizing energy and intellect of European-educated settlers. This indeed is the central thesis of Edward Said's new book, *The Question of Palestine*, and he uses it as a platform from which to indict the West (and by extension Zionism) for what he regards as its callous indifference to the Palestinian Arab tragedy. The theme of Western prejudice towards Islam and the Arabs is not new (the author has expounded it at greater length in his previous work on Orientalism) but it is given a sharper polemical edge by Said's stance in this book as advocate and protagonist of the Palestinian cause.

Himself a man of two cultures, Palestinian-born and American-educated, a New York literary intellectual and a member of the Palestine National Council, Said has evidently experienced the tensions and ambiguities of exile in an intensely personal way. He feels himself embattled in political terms "an outlaw of sorts, or at any rate very much an outsider," engaged in a semi-apocalyptic confrontation with the racist metaphors fabricated by the Western literary imagination. At the same time he has a compulsive need to vindicate the uniqueness of Palestinian identity, to stress the singularity of that experience in terms of the traumatic encounter with Zionism. As a result, not only is Palestinian nationalism somewhat arbitrarily detached from the context of Arab-Islamic history and

politics but a distorted focus emerges whereby all significant movements in the Arab world are seen as being dominated by the Palestine question. Similarly, the Zionist project itself, viewed solely from the angle of its "victims," is never really analysed in its own terms, but reduced to the negative function of systematically repressing the Arab reality in Palestine. However much one may sympathize with the author's conviction against the racist stereotypes from which the Arabs (and Palestinians) have suffered in the West, it is regrettable that he should expend so much effort in seeking to tar Zionism with the same brush. The fact that Tyrwhitt Drake, Lord Kitchener, Sir Flinders Petrie, Charles Clermont-Ganneau, Stanley Cook and many other Victorians had a low opinion of Arab civilization does not prove that Zionism is racist, imperialist or colonialist. None of these men were Jews, let alone Zionists. Indeed the whole pseudo-Marxist framework through which Said seeks to brand Zionism as an extension of nineteenth-century imperialism is to "subject races" seems stale and unconvincing. Nothing could have been further removed from the typical colonial prejudices manifested by white settlers towards the "natives" in Asia and Africa than the mental horizon of the Russian and East European Jews arriving in Palestine from the turn of the century onwards. It was partly in order to avoid a colonial situation and the capitalist exploitation of indigenous labour that the early Zionists endeavoured on creating a Jewish working class and peasantry which would at the same time serve to transform their own national, social and human existence as Jews.

Moreover, precisely because Israel is a Jewish-Zionist State it cannot meaningfully be described either as "white" or "Western" and even Said acknowledges the spuriousness of the parallel with the Africans. The fact is that Jews have never identified themselves in terms of skin colour and in a religious-cultural sense they have always been outsiders in European society. Had the author pursued this theme, he would have found that Jews even more than the Arabs (and Palestinians) have been victims of the Orientalist "mythology" of the West and that Zionism has been the only effective answer that they have found to its murderous logic. Equally, he might have been led to a deeper understanding of the necessity of Zionism had he considered the plight of Jews in the Muslim world since the State of Israel after 1948. For these large, 2,000-year-old communities, as indigenous to the Middle East as the Palestine Arabs and reduced to second-class citizenship in the quasi-colonial Arab states, the Jewish State itself claims to reject a sovereign Jewish State was their only security against ever-recurring Muslim violence and fanaticism. Like the Palestinians, they too had to abandon homes, property, inheritance and personal possessions. Through their successful absorption into Israel they were, however, able to overcome the fragmentation and dispossession which has epitomized the plague of Palestinian society and politics.

The book of essays edited by Joel Migdal makes an important contribution to an understanding of this last phenomenon by examining the changing patterns of Palestinian population movement, social stratification and communal cohesion under the impact of four different regimes—those of the Ottomans, Turks, the British, the Jordanians and the Israelis. The emergence of a distinctive Palestinian identity is analysed here in terms of the development of Palestinian village society, its urban classes, their modes of interaction with the masses. Particular attention is paid to the decline of the old notional families who had controlled Palestinian politics under the Ottomans and British. The defeat of 1948 with its attendant trauma of flight, dispossession, disenfranchisement left the Palestinians disorganized and leaderless. Under Jordanian rule, only a fragmented, local leadership highly dependent on the resources and patronage of the regime in Amman was permitted to

neither of the two parties. . . .

Policy-makers in Washington and London consistently underestimated the power of the two national ideologies, one Arab, the other Jewish, locked in territorial conflict over the destiny of Palestine. Of the two movements, it was Zionism which was until recently much the more successful in capturing the imagination of enlightened liberals, democrats and socialists in the West. For a variety of complex cultural, religious and political reasons the return of the Jews to their biblical homeland has been perceived by many gentiles as an epochal event which deserves their understanding, sympathy and support. The Palestine Arabs, on the other hand, were rarely seen before the 1970s as a people with national rights of their own but more often as backward Orientals with an inferior culture, non-European "natives" whose wishes could be ignored when it came to the division of spoils in the Middle East. Such "Orientalist" stereotypes might perhaps have influenced the readiness of British statesmen to ignore the wishes of the Palestine Arabs when they issued the Balfour Declaration at the zenith of this country's imperial self-confidence. No doubt, too, Zionism may have benefited from the common tendency in the West to regard the Arab Orient as a blank space to be filled, a wilderness to be redeemed by the colonizing energy and intellect of European-educated settlers. This indeed is the central thesis of Edward Said's new book, *The Question of Palestine*, and he uses it as a platform from which to indict the West (and by extension Zionism) for what he regards as its callous indifference to the Palestinian Arab tragedy. The theme of Western prejudice towards Islam and the Arabs is not new (the author has expounded it at greater length in his previous work on Orientalism) but it is given a sharper polemical edge by Said's stance in this book as advocate and protagonist of the Palestinian cause.

Himself a man of two cultures, Palestinian-born and American-educated, a New York literary intellectual and a member of the Palestine National Council, Said has evidently experienced the tensions and ambiguities of exile in an intensely personal way. He feels himself embattled in political terms "an outlaw of sorts, or at any rate very much an outsider," engaged in a semi-apocalyptic confrontation with the racist metaphors fabricated by the Western literary imagination. At the same time he has a compulsive need to vindicate the uniqueness of Palestinian identity, to stress the singularity of that experience in terms of the traumatic encounter with Zionism. As a result, not only is Palestinian nationalism somewhat arbitrarily detached from the context of Arab-Islamic history and

politics but a distorted focus emerges whereby all significant movements in the Arab world are seen as being dominated by the Palestine question. Similarly, the Zionist project itself, viewed solely from the angle of its "victims," is never really analysed in its own terms, but reduced to the negative function of systematically repressing the Arab reality in Palestine. However much one may sympathize with the author's conviction against the racist stereotypes from which the Arabs (and Palestinians) have suffered in the West, it is regrettable that he should expend so much effort in seeking to tar Zionism with the same brush. The fact that Tyrwhitt Drake, Lord Kitchener, Sir Flinders Petrie, Charles Clermont-Ganneau, Stanley Cook and many other Victorians had a low opinion of Arab civilization does not prove that Zionism is racist, imperialist or colonialist. None of these men were Jews, let alone Zionists. Indeed the whole pseudo-Marxist framework through which Said seeks to brand Zionism as an extension of nineteenth-century imperialism is to "subject races" seems stale and unconvincing. Nothing could have been further removed from the typical colonial prejudices manifested by white settlers towards the "natives" in Asia and Africa than the mental horizon of the Russian and East European Jews arriving in Palestine from the turn of the century onwards. It was partly in order to avoid a colonial situation and the capitalist exploitation of indigenous labour that the early Zionists endeavoured on creating a Jewish working class and peasantry which would at the same time serve to transform their own national, social and human existence as Jews.

Saidi's Wife

Often Africa seemed quite empty, the shadows of walls lay on dust, sharp and vacant, like Nubian pyramids.

Stepping through them, Saidi's wife would slowly cross our compound fruit punctuating her scrubbed way

adjusting and readjusting the kanga that half-veiled her face, blushing feet slapping the earth. Then suddenly a glimpse of nipple black as a missionary's berrita.

One day there was gunfire, no more than the spit and cackle of ice dashed with strong spirits, though less than a mile many people died.

As usual Saidi's family worked their fields so that at any hour the village seemed forgotten, the thatched huts lying as still as shells clustered in an abandoned rockpool.

When night came, the palm trees a rotor-blades whipped up a wind, bamboo telescopes searched out the stars, laid always an electric optic song loud but unseen, somewhere in the listening bush.

David Sweetman

